

House to vote on NEA elimination this week Ron Paul will fulfill vow to uphold Constitution, abolish agency For Release: Tuesday, July 8, 1997

House to vote on NEA elimination this week Ron Paul will fulfill vow to uphold Constitution, abolish agency Abolishing the National Endowment for the Arts will be on the agenda of the US House of Representatives this week during debate on the Interior Appropriations Act (HR 2016), with a vote possible as early as Wednesday night. When the Members of Congress cast their votes, at least one member will be favoring the complete abolishment of the agency.

"There is absolutely no constitutional basis for the NEA, it is simply a function which the federal government has no business funding," said US Representative Ron Paul (R-Surfside, Texas). "How can we justify this spending? A \$100 million a year is what this organization has been costing us: a \$100 million every year would have either meant a serious tax cut for Americans, or, at the very least, could have been used to slow the bankruptcy the Social Security trust fund. Even if you can get past the fact that the NEA's existence is unconstitutional, we cannot afford it. I have a hard time with Congress telling our nation's veterans that we have to play games with their benefits to save money, while at the same time we spend money on these kinds of programs."

Paul will be voting for the measure, which calls for the complete phase-out of the NEA.

"How does one publicly fund the arts? What gives the NEA the absolute authority to dictate what is and is not art? What we have seen the NEA call art is what people in the 14th District of Texas rightly call pornographic, blasphemous trash."

The Hollywood elite has called for the continued public funding of the NEA, so Paul said that

perhaps they should put their own money forward.

"It's easy to be generous with taxpayers' money, with other people's money, and the NEA's supporters like to say this is 'only a \$100 million;' well, that's a lot of money to me and my constituents, so I cannot help but wonder why those people who feel so strongly about this don't just fund this program themselves and not bilk the taxpayers," said Paul.

In an open letter sent to all his colleagues in the House of Representatives, Paul called voting to abolish the NEA a good, easy place to start on the path to a fiscal and constitutional responsibility.

"America's century-long experiment with unconstitutional government has failed. It's time to eliminate unconstitutional programs and agencies and return to a government of enumerated powers as envisioned by the" founding fathers.